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Promotion and protection of human rights: implementation of human rights instruments

United Nations voluntary trust fund on contemporary forms of slavery

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/122, provides an overview of the work of the United Nations voluntary trust fund on contemporary forms of slavery, in particular the recommendations for grants to beneficiary organizations that were adopted by the Board of Trustees of the fund at its twenty-first session, held in Geneva from 28 November to 2 December 2016. It also provides information on other recommendations adopted by the Board.

* A/72/150.

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I. Introduction

A. Submission of the report

1. The present report was prepared in accordance with the arrangements approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/122, by which it established the United Nations voluntary trust fund on contemporary forms of slavery. It presents the recommendations adopted by the Board of Trustees of the fund at its twenty-first session, held in Geneva from 28 November to 2 December 2016. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights approved those recommendations on behalf of the Secretary-General on 20 December 2016.

B. Mandate of the fund

2. In line with resolution 46/122, the fund was established with the purpose of extending humanitarian, legal and financial aid to individuals whose human rights have been severely violated as a result of contemporary forms of slavery. The fund receives voluntary contributions from Governments, non-governmental organizations, private or public entities and individuals.

C. Administration of the fund and Board of Trustees

3. The Secretary-General administers the fund through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), with the advice of a Board of Trustees and in accordance with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations.

4. The Board of Trustees is composed of five members with relevant experience in the field of human rights and, in particular, issues of contemporary forms of slavery. They serve in their personal capacity and are appointed by the Secretary-General with due regard to equitable geographical distribution. The current members of the Board are Renu Rajbhandari (Nepal), Leonardo Sakamoto (Brazil) and Nevena Vučković-Šahović (Serbia), who has served as Chairperson of the Board since its twentieth session. The mandates of Michael Beresford Dottridge (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) and George Omona (Uganda) ended on 31 December 2016 and new trustees will be appointed by the Secretary-General.

II. Management of grants

A. Admissibility criteria

5. In accordance with the mandate of the fund as set out in General Assembly resolution 46/122, the beneficiaries of assistance from the fund are individuals whose human rights have been severely violated as a result of contemporary forms of slavery. Project admissibility criteria are outlined in the fund's guidelines. The aim of project proposals should be the delivery of assistance services to beneficiaries, who must be victims of contemporary forms of slavery and, when applicable, members of their families. As indicated in the fund's guidelines, contemporary forms of slavery that qualify for project grants by the fund include traditional slavery, serfdom, servitude, forced labour, debt bondage, the worst forms of child labour, forced and early marriage, the sale of wives and inherited widows, trafficking in persons and human organs, sexual slavery, the sale of children, the

commercial sexual exploitation of children and the use of children in armed conflict.

6. Priority in allocating grants is accorded to projects implemented by civil society organizations that aim to provide reparation, empowerment and integration of victims of contemporary forms of slavery through direct assistance. This may include medical, psychological, social, legal, humanitarian and educational assistance, vocational or skills training or other assistance in support of an independent livelihood.[1]

7. By 1 March 2016, the deadline for submitting applications for project grants for 2017, the fund had received 99 applications. After the applications were pre-screened by the secretariat of the fund, 87 were declared admissible and were examined by the Board at its twenty-first session.

8. The deadline for submitting applications for project grants for 2018 was 1 March 2017. Admissible project applications will be examined by the Board at its twenty-second session, to be held in Geneva from 27 November to 1 December 2017. In 2018, the Board will continue to give priority to project proposals intended to assist women and children victims of slavery as a consequence of conflicts and humanitarian crises, as well as proposals intended to support victims' access to justice.

B. Monitoring and evaluation by the secretariat of the fund

9. At its twenty-first session, the Board was presented with 87 admissible applications for project grants to be awarded and put to use in 2017. Before the session, 27 of the project proposals were evaluated through on-site visits by staff of the secretariat of the fund, OHCHR country and regional offices, human rights components of peacekeeping missions and members of the Board. On-site pre-screening and technical evaluation visits to applicant organizations are a key methodology of the fund. On-site visits are coordinated by OHCHR, for cost-efficiency purposes, with visits undertaken on behalf of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture.

III. Financial situation of the fund

10. Notwithstanding the fundraising and outreach efforts of the members of the Board and the secretariat of the fund, which resulted in an increase in the yearly income of the fund for 2017 and in the expansion of its donor base, the fund remains underfunded. Since 2002, the fund has received a total of $7.9 million in contributions from Member States, which represents an average yearly income of $500,000. A peak of contributions was observed in 2009, with income amounting to $886,000. In order to meaningfully fulfil its mandate and adequately respond to the needs of victims, the fund requires at least $2 million in contributions each year. The contributions received in 2016 for 2017 covered only 38 per cent of that target. For 2018, the fund aims to reach the symbolic ceiling of $1 million in contributions, encouraged by the positive feedback received on its operations by an increasing number of State representatives.

11. The table below shows the contributions and pledges received in 2016.

[1] Detailed information on the types of assistance provided to victims through the projects financed by the fund, as well as their impact on the lives of the identified beneficiaries, can be found at www.ohchr.org/slaveryfund. Brochures and leaflets regarding the fund are also displayed there.

Contributions and pledges received in 2016

(United States dollars)

Donor	*Amount*	*Date of receipt*
Australia	194 317	9 March 2016
Germany	222 965	7 June 2016
India	25 000	15 January 2016
Luxembourg	16 760	24 August 2016
Qatar	10 000	31 May 2016
Saudi Arabia	75 000	3 June 2016
South Africa	3 698	4 April 2016
Spain	38 043	29 November 2016
United Arab Emirates	30 000	25 February 2016
United Kingdom	139 921	26 August and 28 November 2016
Holy See	2 500	17 October 2016
Total	**758 204**	

IV. Twenty-first session of the Board of Trustees

12. The twenty-first session of the Board of Trustees was held in Geneva from 28 November to 2 December 2016. The twenty-fifth anniversary of the fund and the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery on 2 December 2016 were both celebrated during the session, and one day of the session was devoted to an expert panel on child victims of slavery. Furthermore, in accordance with the new mission statement of the fund, adopted on 26 November 2015 (A/71/272, para. 27), the Board increasingly pursued closer coordination with other actors in the field of contemporary forms of slavery. During the session, the Board had fruitful exchanges with representatives of Member States and OHCHR senior management, including the Director of the Human Rights Council Treaty Mechanisms Division, the Chief of the External Outreach Services and the Chief of the Human Rights Treaties Branch. The Board also met with relevant special procedure mandate holders of the Human Rights Council, in particular, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and its consequences, and with OHCHR staff who support the Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children, including child prostitution, child pornography and other child sexual abuse material and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, as well as the secretariat of the United Nations voluntary trust fund for victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children. The Board was particularly pleased with the growing cooperation with the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, and remains committed to promoting coordination with all relevant stakeholders.

13. The Board is of the view that Alliance 8.7[2] provides a much-needed framework for coordination among all relevant actors, within which the participation of the fund would ensure that the perspectives of the victims are represented and addressed.

A. Grant-making recommendations

14. After the successful conclusion of the 2017 call for proposals and the subsequent intersessional evaluation and selection process by the secretariat, at its twenty-first session the Board was presented with 87 applications for project grants, amounting to $1.9 million requested for the assistance of victims of contemporary forms of slavery worldwide. The Board decided to accord priority to the review of project proposals that had been highly recommended for funding by the secretariat. Through a competitive review based on both geographic and thematic criteria, it recommended the approval of 33 project grants, for a total of $553,000. Those recommendations were approved by the High Commissioner on behalf of the Secretary-General on 20 December 2016. Five project proposals, totalling $110,000, remained on a reserve list, awaiting additional income to be received by the fund before 31 December 2016. Owing to insufficient income, the implementation of those five vetted project proposals was not financed in 2017.

15. Through the 33 grants approved by the Board, in 2017 the fund will assist non-governmental organizations in 32 countries by supporting 8 projects in Asia, 8 in Africa, 4 in Eastern Europe, 6 in Latin America and the Caribbean and 7 in the countries of the Western European and other States group. Through the awarded projects, more than 37,000 victims are expected to be provided with redress and rehabilitation services after having been subjected to contemporary forms of slavery, such as the worst forms of child labour, domestic servitude, forced and early marriage, bonded and forced labour, sexual exploitation and trafficking in persons for labour and sexual exploitation. By way of example, in 2017, the fund will partner with an organization in Nigeria assisting victims of sexual slavery and of the worst forms of child labour who are rescued from Boko Haram and other armed groups in the north-eastern provinces of the country. In Brazil, the aim of the approved project is to provide multidimensional assistance to victims of forced labour working in eucalyptus and rubber plantations, cattle ranches and coal mines. In Iraq, the fund will support, for the first time, an organization providing legal assistance to victims of sexual slavery and forced labour.

16. Figures I and II illustrate the breakdown of the 33 grants approved for 2017, by region and by type of contemporary slavery.

[2] Alliance 8.7 was created to help national governments achieve the ambitious undertaking of target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, in coordination with workers' and employers' organizations, civil society organizations, the United Nations and other international organizations. Alliance 8.7 is part of an integrated strategy to promote fundamental freedoms, principles and rights at work and collaborates closely with existing programmes. It will also foster synergies with partnerships on other Sustainable Development Goals. At the initial stage, the International Labour Organization is serving as the secretariat for Alliance 8.7. In that role, it is working in close consultation with other United Nations agencies, governments, workers' and employers' organizations and other interested partners.

Figure I
Grants awarded for 2017, by region

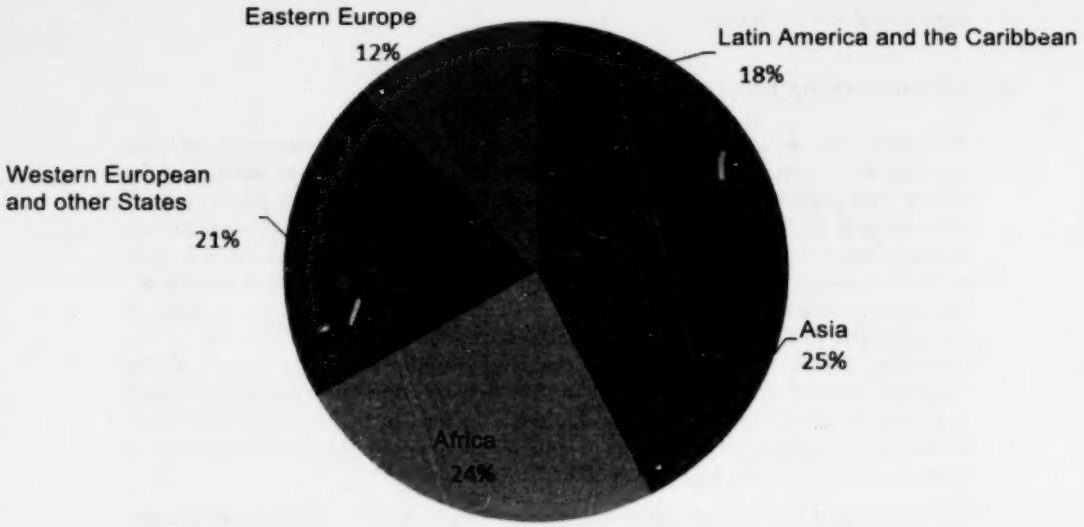
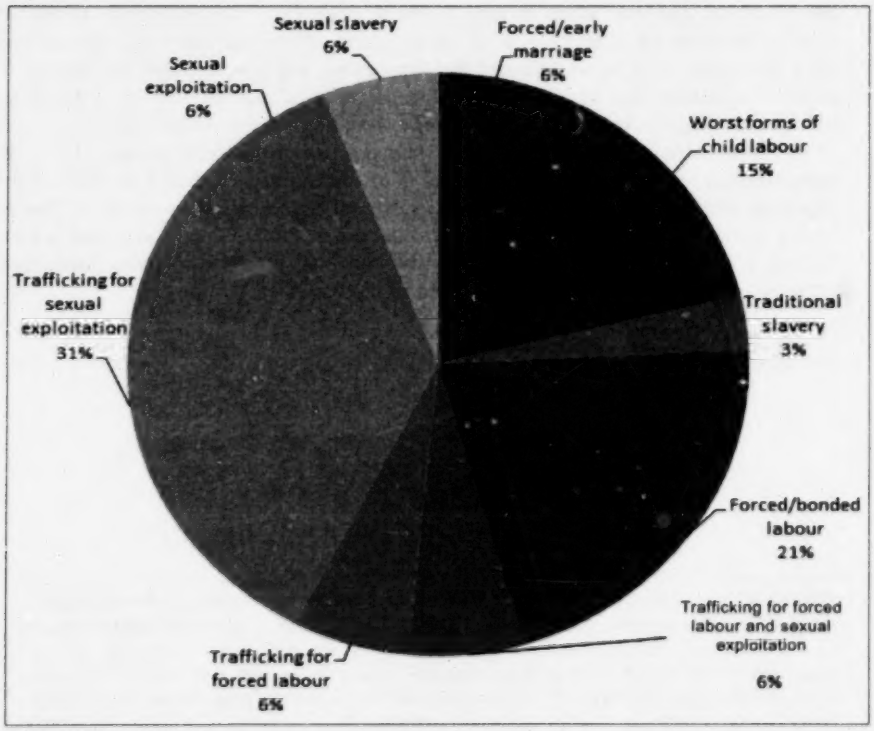


Figure II
Grants awarded for 2017, by type of contemporary slavery



B. Policy recommendations

17. During its twenty-first session, the Board also reviewed its working methods to bring them more closely into line with the fund's new mission statement. In particular, the Board recommended that, as of 2018, annual grants should be raised to a maximum of $30,000. In addition, a two-cycle gap should be applied to project proposals that had been evaluated as inadmissible and/or not recommended during the pre-screening phase by the secretariat. Finally, the Board reiterated the general rule of a one-cycle gap for projects that had been granted funding for five consecutive years.

18. The Board also recommended holding an expert panel to enable discussions and the sharing of best practices on rehabilitation and redress for victims of slavery during its twenty-second session (27 November-1 December 2017).

19. Furthermore, for the 2018 call for project proposals, the Board recommended that priority be given to proposals intended to provide specialized assistance to victims of slavery and that demonstrate a sound methodology for victims' rehabilitation and redress. Particular attention would be given to proposals intended to assist women and children victims of slavery as a consequence of conflicts and humanitarian crises, as well as proposals geared towards supporting victims' access to justice. The High Commissioner approved all of the recommendations, on behalf of the Secretary-General, on 20 December 2016.

C. Cooperation with Member States

20. On 30 November 2016, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other international organizations organized a luncheon to showcase the impact of the projects supported by the fund, which was attended by the Permanent Representatives of Australia, the Netherlands, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States of America and Uruguay, and of the Holy See, to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other international organizations. The aim of the event was to increase the visibility of the fund and encourage support in order to reach the fund's target of a minimum of $2 million in contributions per year, which is required to enable it to effectively fulfil its mandate and contribute towards the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal target 8.7 (see A/71/272). During the event, the fund's solid, victim-centred methodology, the quality control of its operations and its policy of small-scale grants that generate a quantifiable impact on the lives of rights holders were highlighted as being among its greatest strengths.

D. International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

21. On the occasion of the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, on 2 December 2016, the fund convened an expert panel on the theme "Revealing the child faces of modern slavery", which focused on the incidence of contemporary forms of slavery among children and the specific requirements for their rehabilitation. The panel featured the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, a representative of the International Labour Organization (ILO), and experts from selected civil society organizations around the world working with child victims of contemporary forms of slavery with the support of the fund. The event was attended by representatives of over 50 Member States, civil society organizations and United Nations entities as

well as the general public. Australia and Germany provided funding for the organization of the panel. A public debate followed the panellists' presentations.

22. In his statement, the High Commissioner for Human Rights emphasized that modern slavery was often hidden from sight and he paid tribute to the work of professionals around the world, including those supported by the fund, who, on a daily basis, assisted child victims of contemporary forms of slavery. The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery shared her experiences of meeting with child victims of contemporary forms of slavery around the world and underscored the devastation, pain, humiliation and absolute destruction of the human spirit caused by the continued existence of the institutions and practices of slavery. The representative of ILO reminded the audience that slavery happened in almost every economic sector around the world, and that a shocking 5.5 million children were victims of contemporary forms of slavery. Other speakers, including a former victim of child slavery and professionals from rehabilitation centres financially supported by the fund, provided moving accounts of efforts and successes in terms of assistance to victims of modern slavery through different rehabilitation programmes, such as legal and psychosocial support and economic empowerment.

23. In his message on the occasion of the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, the Secretary-General also urged Member States, businesses, foundations and other donors and potential donors to support the fund so as to enable it to provide crucial rehabilitation to victims of modern slavery worldwide.

V. How to contribute to the fund

24. The fund depends on voluntary contributions from Governments, non-governmental organizations and other private or public entities. Donors should indicate "for the slavery fund, account SH" on a payment order. For information on how to contribute, donors are requested to contact:

Secretariat of the United Nations voluntary trust fund on contemporary forms of slavery
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
United Nations
CH 1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland
Email: slaveryfund@ohchr.org
Tel: +41 22 917 9376
Fax: +41 22 917 9017

www.ohchr.org/slaveryfund

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

25. **Since the adoption of a new mission statement for the fund, in 2015, the Board of Trustees of the fund, jointly with the secretariat, has undertaken outreach initiatives to increase the visibility of the fund and enhance coordination with other actors involved in the eradication of all forms of slavery, including the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery and other relevant special procedure mandate holders, ILO and the United Nations voluntary trust fund for victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children. As the Board noted, the magnitude of contemporary forms of slavery requires strong engagement within the framework provided by**

Alliance 8.7, including through the support provided by the fund, with its unique victim-centred approach and impact.

26. **The Secretary-General endorses the Board's encouragement to all Member States to help the fund reach the symbolic target of $1 million in contributions by the end of 2017.**

27. **For 2018, the fund will continue to give priority to projects providing specialized assistance to victims and project applications that propose activities spanning a number of years, so as to ensure continuity and greater impact. It will also prioritize the needs of women and children victims of slavery, in particular those living in situations of conflict and humanitarian crises, through the awarding of larger grants (ranging from $20,000 to $30,000).**

28. **The Secretary-General, in line with his message to mark the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, urges Member States, businesses, foundations and other potential donors to support the fund so that it can provide crucial rehabilitation assistance to victims of modern slavery worldwide.**